

Tale Feathers

Feb 2005

Volume 72
Number 1

St. Louis Audubon Society

Annual banquet

Friday, April 8th

Kenn Kaufman, Author and Birder, Keynote Speaker

We are pleased to announce our 2005 Annual Banquet will be held in the Cheshire Inn's Palladium Room at 6300 Clayton on Friday, April 8th. Awards will be presented for Conservationist of the Year, Legislator of the Year and the Robert J. Terry Lifetime Achievement. A silent auction will be held, with proceeds directly benefiting the Society's conservation and education work around the region. Just a few of the items for bid include artwork, birding and photography gear, memberships and personal birding adventures. A complete listing and detailed description will be in a future newsletter and on our website, www.stlouisaudubon.org, by April 1st.

We are deeply honored to have Kenn Kaufman as our keynote speaker. Mr. Kaufman is a prolific author, including such works as the *Lives of North American Birds*, *Butterflies of North America* and *Kingbird Highway*; the latter about his adventures at age 16 hitchhiking across North America in pursuit of birds. He is the youngest person ever to receive the Ludlow Griscom Distinguished Birder Award, the highest honor of the American Birding Association. Further, Mr. Kaufman is a field editor for *Audubon* magazine and a regular contributor to nearly every major birding magazine.

5:30 p.m.-Business Meeting

6:00 p.m.-Cash Bar Opens, Silent Auction Starts

7:00 p.m.-Dinner Service

The business meeting is open to all, but only current SLAS members will be allowed to vote in the election of the Board of Directors. Feel free to skip the business portion and arrive during the social hour that starts at 6 p.m. The cost is just \$20 per person. Reservations are required-**please use the form on page 3 of this newsletter. Space is limited, so please register early to be sure you can enjoy this wonderful evening!**

The Cheshire Inn is near the intersection of Clayton and Skinker, just across Clayton Avenue and south of the giant Amoco station. To avoid traffic, suggest you approach from the west on Clayton. Parking is in front of the restaurant or in a garage just behind the hotel.

Inside

February Joint
Meeting with
WGNSS

Birding trips

President's
Report

Hog Island
Experience

Articles from
scholarship
winners

St. Louis Audubon Society

DONATIONS

We would like to acknowledge the following grants and donations:

\$1,000 dollar grant from
Pfizer Foundation

A \$500 dollar gift from
Phyllis McPheeters

A \$50 dollar gift by Mrs.
Glad in memory of her sister-
in-law, Mrs. Jeanette Bott

\$10 from Walter Klein

Thank you all for your generous contributions!

The Pioneer Forest-A Forestry and Conservation Success

February Joint Meeting with WGNSS

Mark your calendar for Friday, February 11 at 7:30 p.m. at the Creve Coeur Community Center.

Greg Iffrig, Pioneer Forest Chief of Recreation and Reserves, will discuss just how the nearly 160,000-acre Pioneer Forest has become a nationally recognized model for sustainable forestry. Mr. Iffrig worked for the State Parks Division of the Missouri DNR for eight years, followed by the Natural Areas Association for five. He joined the Pioneer Forest in 1992.

The Pioneer Forest, in the heart of the Ozarks, has been conservatively managed to maximize both timber extraction and ecosystem health for nearly half a century. One indicator of the Forest's success could be The Forest Stewardship Council's certification of it in 2003; the council is the most stringent program recognizing sustainable management and guaranteeing environmentally friendly wood products for consumers. Even better, studies have shown many bird species, such as the red-eyed vireo, worm-eating warbler, and acadian flycatcher, remain numerous on selectively cut areas and some, including the hooded warbler and northern parula, actually increased their numbers versus unharvested, mature sites. Salamanders, insects, spiders and other arthropods are just some of the many organisms that have been studied to insure the Forest's logging practices at least retain, if not enhance, the Ozark ecosystem.

In July 2004, Leo and Kay Drey, founder and owners of the Pioneer Forest, donated more than 146,000 acres of it to the L-A-D Foundation, thereby ensuring for perpetuity that the Forest will be managed through environmentally sound and sustainable practices.

This is our annual joint meeting with the Webster Groves Nature Study Society, so you will have twice the people to meet and twice the opportunities to discover. The meeting is open to all, members or not. Refreshments will be available.

From I-270 and Ladue, go east on Ladue, left at the light at New Ballas, go 1/2 mile north to the Creve Coeur Government Center at 300 N. New Ballas. Community Center is in the northwest corner of the lower level (closest to Olive and Ballas).
Questions, call Mitch Leachman at 314-739-5112.

Thanks For A Great Holiday Party!

More than sixty-five people attended the St. Louis Audubon Society-Webster Groves Nature Study Society holiday party held at The Green Center on Dec. 5. Many thanks to all who attended and participated in the festivities. We especially want to thank those who donated holiday decorations and items for the attendance drawings of nature-related gifts: Dave Pierce and Judy Rowe of the Wild Bird Center, artists Jim Ziebol, Dale Ponce, and Margie Richardson, photographers Rick Walters, Margy and Dan Terpstra, beekeeper Jim Jordan, book contributor Clarence Zacher, and Shaw Nature Reserve Staff Educators Barb Troutman and Karen Bryan. Thanks also to Dave Tylka and Dan Terpstra for their help with setting up beforehand and cleaning up afterwards. And, for planning and putting on a wonderful party, a big thanks to the committee of Margy Terpstra, Tina Weyman, Dency Kahn, and Ann Earley. Happy New Year to all St. Louis Audubon Society members!

The Southern-South American Temperate Rainforest: a bird fauna on a threatened island

Cintia Cornelius

The temperate rainforest of South America is located in southern Chile and part of Argentina. This forest is considered a biogeographical island with a unique forest ecosystem and with a high proportion of endemic plant and animal species. Although bird diversity is not very high (44 forest bird species) as many as 66% are endemic or unique to this rainforest. Many birds exhibit small geographic ranges and considering the rapid habitat loss occurring in this region, rates of endangerment will increase considerably in the future. Human encroachment, use of fire, agriculture, and logging have caused degradation and fragmentation of these forests. This degradation has been so acute that the World Wildlife Fund recognizes this ecosystem type as having high priority for conservation.

Fundación Senda Darwin (FSD) is a non-governmental organization that works on Chiloé Island in southern Chile, a region where human practices have heavily fragmented the forest, but a region where conservation action and work with land-owners are still possible to protect the remaining rainforest. One goal of the research that I am conducting in these forests, as part of my PhD dissertation at University of Missouri-St. Louis and associated to FSD, is to understand basic habitat relationships of an endemic bird species: the Thorn-tailed Rayadito (*Aphrastura spinicauda*, Furnariidae). We are using this bird as a model species to evaluate the consequences of forest fragmentation and habitat degradation on nest success and nest site selection patterns to identify key structures in the forest that might be important for the conservation of cavity nesters. Rayaditos are secondary cavity nesters (i.e. they do not build their own cavities) and thus are associated with old trees that provide natural cavities. Consequently, disturbed forests in which large trees have been removed may be habitats of low quality.

So far several interesting results have emerged from our study. As expected, Rayaditos are more abundant in old-growth forests than in forests where selective logging is carried out. This study is the first to report aspects of the breeding biology of Rayaditos

in natural nest-sites. Most nests were found in natural cavities and in live trees or in snags at a mean height of 17 m. Moreover, most nests in live trees were found in one tree species, an endemic oak known as "Coigue" (*Nothofagus nitida*, Fagaceae). This tree was recognized as a key structure in the forest of Chiloé because it provides nesting sites and forging substrate for Rayaditos and other cavity nesters. In addition, we wanted to know if the observed patterns of nest-site preference differed between undisturbed and disturbed forests. In old-growth forests, Rayaditos preferred "Coigue" trees over other tree species and snags, however, in logged forests most nests were found in snags because of the low availability of old live trees. The preference of "Coigue" trees in old-growth-forests may be associated to some benefit from nesting in such cavities. To test this idea we compared nest success in "Coigue" trees and snags, and we found that nests in "Coigue" trees were more successful than nests in snags. Consequently, old-growth forests appear to be a habitat of higher quality for Rayaditos, and probably for other cavity nesters as well, because they do not only contain more nest sites but also more high quality nest sites in comparison to forests where selective logging is carried out. Results from this work will help to develop management plans in the Chiloé region and funding from several intuitions such as the St. Louis Audubon Society have been essential for this study.



A recipient of one of our graduate student scholarships, Cintia Cornelius is doing research on the "rayadito", a bird of the temperate rainforest located in southern Chile and part of Argentina. We are pleased to be able to help facilitate this type of research through our scholarships. (Lynne Breakstone)

Annual Banquet Registration Form

Please mail this form or a copy with payment to:

Mitch Leachman, 2728 Lakeport Drive, Maryland Heights, MO 63043

Make checks payable to St. Louis Audubon Society.

Name(s)

\$20.00 x _____ = _____
Fee No. Total Enclosed

Entrée Choices, Please Select One Per Person

London Broil _____ Chicken Marsala _____ Pasta Primavera _____

SLAS Birding Trips for February and March 2005

John Solodar

February 5, Saturday - Riverlands. This is our annual afternoon trip to Riverlands that starts at 1:00 PM. Expect lots of good gull talk, but dress very warmly. We expect to see some ducks as well plus some wintering sparrows and maybe some surprises. Mike Grant and Josh Uffman will lead this trip. This author, however, will be in Miami in preparation for a flight to Quito, Ecuador.

February 19, Saturday - Baldwin Lake/Peabody Coal Strip Mines. This all day trip starts at 9:00 AM, so bring a lunch and lots of warm clothing. Torrey Berger and Dave Rogles will lead us as we search for Snow Geese, Ross' Geese, ducks, Loggerhead Shrikes, Short-eared Owls and lots of other goodies. Bring an Illinois map as it can be a little tricky navigating home from the Peabody Coal Strip Mines. An FRS radio is also very handy on this trip.

March 12, Saturday - Busch Conservation Area, Annual Woodcock and Owl Prowl. This trip starts at 4:30 pm at the Hampton Lake parking area. This is always a fun time as we look for owls early on and then head to an area where we expect to see woodcocks do their mating call and flight. This occurs just as dusk is turning into darkness. Torrey Berger and Josh Uffman will lead this trip.

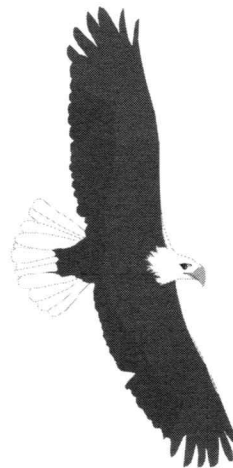
March 26, Saturday - Riverlands and Horseshoe Lake. This trip starts at 8:00 AM from Riverlands and then moves on to Horseshoe Lake in Illinois. There is a good chance of hitting the new Confluence Park as well. Trip leaders will be Paul Bauer and Pat Lueders. We suggest bringing an FRS radio if you have one.

How to get there

Baldwin Lake. Take I-270 across from Jefferson Barracks Bridge to IL. Take Hwy 3 south to Redbud. Go east on Hwy 154 to Baldwin, IL. Follow signs in town to Lake Baldwin. Meet in parking lot inside gate.

Busch Conservation Area Take U.S.40/I-64 west into St. Charles County. Take Hwy 94 south from U.S. 40 about 1 mile to Hwy D. Turn right and go about 1.5 miles to the entrance on the right. Turn left at the "T" to Hampton Lake and meet in the parking lot. For trips using a H.Q. starting point turn right at the "T".

Riverlands - Take Hwy 367 north from I-270. The designation changes to Hwy 67 just beyond the 4th traffic light, but continue. Turn right on last road just before the Clark Bridge at the Mississippi River. (Fisca gas station at this turn.) Turn right on the first road and park in the Teal Pond parking lot.



Field Trip Report for Saturday, January 8, 2005

Mike Thelen

Twelve souls joined today's ST. LOUIS AUDUBON SOCIETY field trip to Riverlands EDA in St. Charles County. A fresh snowfall last night, about two inches, made for a lovely, wintry landscape.

Heavy rain this past week has swelled the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. The Mississippi pooled lake-like above the Melvin Price Locks and Dam (MPLD), and the surface water was placid. The Missouri, on the other hand, was positively shooting past Confluence Point.

The top highlight of the day were the two LONG-TAILED DUCKS, relocated by the group this morning from atop the levee adjacent to the MPLD (Missouri side; I believe the birds were in Missouri). We were looking upstream and the birds were mixed with COMMON GOLDENEYE around the point of the spit that projects upriver. From the same site we saw NO gulls perched on the MPLD wall (the one extending downstream from the dam), and NO gulls swarming over the race water. I don't think I've ever seen this before in winter.

Ducks, overall, were just not there in big numbers. Common Goldeneye was the most common species, with a total in the high hundreds or perhaps 1,000. There were small numbers of GREATER SCAUP and LESSER SCAUP, with greater outnumbering lessers about two-to-one. There were three white domestic ducks scattered about. One NORTHERN PINTAIL had a DEFORMED bill that drooped bizarrely.

Near the end of the day I saw an unusual duck, from the observation platform overlooking Ellis Bay. It was shaped, roughly, like a Hooded Merganser, but shared some of the field marks of a Common Goldeneye. Was it a HOODED MERGANSER x COMMON GOLDENEYE hybrid? Or something else? Nick Barber might have seen this bird in the morning and described it, but I did not get to talk to him about it before he left the group.

We counted a total of 63 TRUMPETER SWANS; 15 seen by Paul Bauer before the official start, plus 48 in Heron Pond. The only positively ID'd tag that I'm aware of was a yellow band, number P59.

BALD EAGLES were all around, and my estimate for the day is 45. Other hawks included NORTHERN HARRIER (2 adult males, plus 1 juv male); COOPER'S HAWK (1); RED-TAILED HAWK (1); AMERICAN KESTREL (5).

We did not identify any special gulls, except there was a candidate for adult THAYER'S GULL, seen from the parking lot of the MPLD visitor's center (the Illinois side). The bird was standing on a railing and had deep, rosy pink legs and feet; a greenish-yellow bill and big white spots on the wingtips. But it wouldn't fly and we never saw the entire bird in the air.

Hawaii. The Galápagos. Bermuda. To many people these

remote islands sound like Gardens of Eden: stress-free locales with powers to rejuvenate, invigorate, and restore. Biologists see islands in a slightly different light; ever since Darwin's exploration on the HMS Beagle, islands have been viewed as natural laboratories ideal for studying evolution. As the result of isolation and time, the genetic and physical characteristics of birds found on oceanic islands are often quite different from their closest continental relatives. Furthermore, the pathogens and parasite communities of the two locations are expected to differ as well. With this in mind, I set out to compare infection and immunity in birds from the continental US with birds from islands.

Distant oceanic archipelagos are often home to diverse radiations of land birds. One example of an adaptive radiation familiar to many ornithologists is the honeycreeper family (Drepanidinae) of Hawaii. In a way, when the first honeycreeper ancestors arrived to Hawaii, they, in fact, found a sort of Garden of Eden. Regardless of whether it resulted from a bungled migration attempt or a hurricane, after ending up thousands of miles off course, these honeycreeper ancestors landed in an extraordinary place where they were greeted by few, if any, other land animals. This absence translated to ample food resources and habitats free of competitors and predators. Thus, over many, many generations, these early avian arrivals to Hawaii evolved into the fantastic array of honeycreepers that welcomed the first human arrivals around 1500 years ago.

In addition to the noticeable absence of land animals, the first avian arrivals to the islands were also likely only exposed to the range of pathogens and parasites that arrived with the birds. Even for millennia following the initial colonization, small oceanic islands that are hundred or thousands of miles from the nearest continental landmass are thought harbor fewer parasites, pathogens, and vectors than the continents. For example, Hawaii was free from the mosquito vector of avian malaria until the nineteenth century. Since the introduction of the mosquito, however, the native birds of Hawaii have been hit unusually hard by this disease, and in some cases it has resulted in extinction. Thus, it appears that over evolutionary time, immune defenses of these birds have become attenuated.

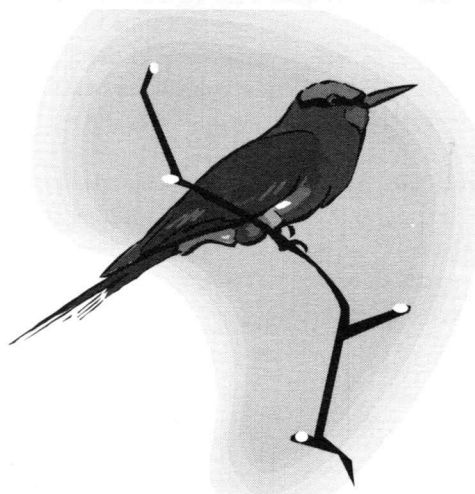
To achieve my goal of comparing infection and immunity in birds from continental US with birds from islands, work in laboratory and work in the field are both required. The first component of my research centered on developing an immune measure that could be applied widely across numerous species and individuals. Now developed and published¹, this method, which is conducted in the laboratory, measures the birds' innate immune abilities to clump and burst foreign cells. Because measurement of immune function in wild birds is emerging as an important tool for ecologists and evolutionary biologists, publication of this method is expected impact research beyond my investigations of island/mainland differences.

After developing this methodology, I began collecting plasma samples from the birds in my study. As a part of this, I completed a trip to Hawaii thanks in part to a St Louis Audubon Society graduate student research award. During this month-long trip I visited two islands: Oahu and Hawaii. I netted in 8 at locations

ranging from sea level to 2600 feet and collected samples from 321 birds from over 25 species. The most commonly netted species include the Japanese white-eye (*Zosterops japonicus*), the House finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*), the Northern cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*), the Zebra dove (*Geopelia striata*), and the Spotted dove (*Streptopelia chinensis*). The least commonly netted species include the White-rumped shama (*Copsychus malabaricus*), the Yellow-fronted canary (*Serinus mozambicus*), the Yellow-billed cardinal (*Paroaria capitata*), the Lavender waxbill (*Estrilda caerulescens*), and the Warbling silverbill (*Lonchura cantans*). While clearly all non-native Hawaiian species, many of these can still be used in valuable comparisons with their continental counterparts. Additionally, for a number of native species, I collected samples from captive populations (i.e. in zoos or rehabilitation centers).

Currently, I am in the process of analyzing the hundreds of samples from the Galápagos, Bermuda, Hawaii, and, of course, Missouri that have been collected by me and by my collaborators. I am also beginning to genetically type and quantify bacterial strains collected from birds in each location. It is too early to report any results or conclusions regarding the island/mainland comparison, but the work is progressing smoothly and I hope to complete my PhD research by the end of next year.

1Matson KD, Ricklefs RE, Klasing KC. A hemolysis-hemagglutination assay for characterizing constitutive innate humoral immunity in wild and domestic birds. *Developmental and Comparative Immunology* 2005; 29: 275-286.



As was reported in the November issue of this newsletter, St. Louis Audubon awards an annual graduate student scholarship to further research that promotes the Audubon mission. One recent recipient, Kevin Matson, gives here a brief report of his research on avian immunity in the birds of Hawaii. Mr. Matson recently had a peer-reviewed article published (Developmental and Comparative Immunology) in which he acknowledges the SLAS funding he received.

Hog Island Experience

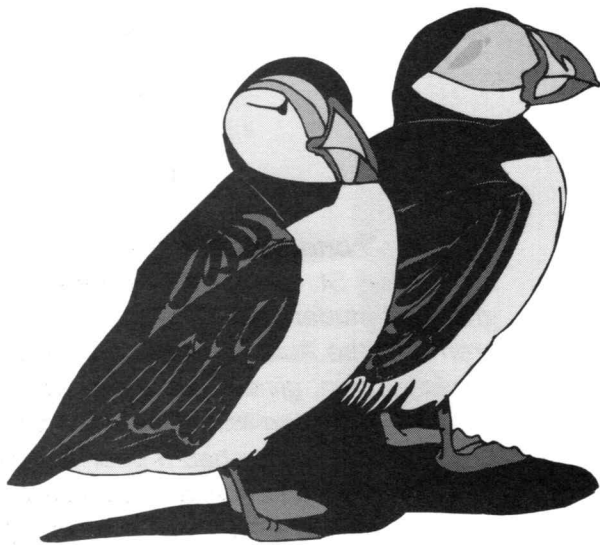
Through your scholarship program, the Audubon Society of St. Louis made it possible for me to experience incredible beauty, feel rejuvenated, and more inspired to share knowledge of the natural world with my students. I was lucky to spend a week in Maine on Hog Island.

The Audubon camp in Maine is located on Hog Island, a 333 acre island about sixty miles from Portland and a quarter mile offshore. The island is mostly mature spruce-fir forest and large hay scented fern balds which are the result of past hurricanes. The first sight of the camp from shore looked like a scene from the L. L. Bean catalog and made me anticipate lazy days and an escape from the noise of every day life! The setting is beautiful yet rustic, with wood frame buildings that house the sleeping quarters, dining hall, and classrooms. I soon came to find out that lazy days were possible but surprisingly, not my first choice!

Our schedule, presented each morning at breakfast, varied daily, except for the morning bird watching walk. It included instructional classes, guest speakers, cruises, hikes and opportunities to socialize. While I found every session informative, highlights for me included a cruise to Eastern Egg Rock Island to see a restored puffin and tern habitat and the intertidal exploration, both accomplished in the pouring rain! The instructors included a professor of marine biology, naturalists and fellow teachers with expertise in ecology and conservation. We even spent time reading poetry while hiking through the fantastic forests. Hikes were also a perfect time to learn about the flora and fauna, as well as the history of the island. My fellow campers, who were also educators, soon became fellow learners and mentors.

I would urge others to take advantage of this wonderful peaceful island setting and support this educational opportunity. I will never forget the beauty of this island forest. Oh, and believe what they say about needing everything from shorts to a winter coat! Its good advice!

Gale Reed
Community
School



President's Report

Dave Tylka

Get your calendars out and mark Friday, April 8, 2005, for the St. Louis Audubon Annual Banquet. In a break from tradition, we will be focusing primarily on our election of board members and officers during a shortened business meeting and having the first-ever silent auction during a cocktail/iced tea hour prior to our dinner. For a special treat this year, we have bird-er and author Kenn Kaufman coming to town. Be sure to send in your reservations early because we expect a great turnout to hear Kenn speak! Similar to last year, we will distribute written annual committee reports and will later post them on our website for those unable to attend. For more details about this exciting event and our speaker, refer back to the front-page article.

To help make the annual banquet a success, we will be contacting various artists, photographers, nature-related businesses to contribute framed artwork, framed photographs, and outdoor equipment to the silent auction. If you have any of these items that you would like to donate, please contact Banquet Chair Mitch Leachman in the evening at 314/739-5112. Donors will be recognized for their tax-deductible contributions at the banquet, in our newsletter and on our website.

Any organization is only as good as its members. We have been blessed with many excellent volunteers over the years, but some of our board members and officers have reached their term limits. Therefore, we have a few vacancies coming up in April. If any chapter members have suggestions for potential board member candidates, please contact one of our chapter nominating committee members: Josh Uffman (eve. 314/524-7637), Bill Salsgiver (eve. 636/225-1490) or Jim Holsen (314/822-0410).

Another activity members can participate in is Citizen Science, which has grown over the last decade. One opportunity you may want to investigate is The Great Backyard Bird Count, taking place over four days from February 18 through

February 21, 2005. This is a joint effort of Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. About 45,000 bird count checklists were tallied last year, and the goal this year is 55,000. For more information, go to www.birdsource.org/gbbc/ or call our Conservation Chair Linda Tossing at 314/849-4260.

New Members

Ivy Allen
Mrs. M. Anderson
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Matthew J. Avis
Sarah Ballard
Martha Bastida
Lynne Battista
George Berry
Susan C. Berthold
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Marian Brown
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Tale Feathers

Tale Feathers is published monthly by the St. Louis Audubon Society. Messenger Printing prints 2,500 copies of each newsletter on recycled paper using soy ink. Anne Bolte edits the newsletter.

St. Louis Audubon Society 2004 - 2005

St. Louis Audubon Society
P.O. Box 220227
Kirkwood, MO 63122
Phone: 314-822-6595

Officers

President - Dave Tylka	636-942-3142
VP Education - Sharon Nickl	636-391-8751
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Dency Kahn	dkahn@stlcc.edu
Julie Leeman	636-861-1490
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John Solodar	314-862-5294
Mike Thelen	314-862-6642
Josh Iffman	314-524-7637
Jim Wilson	314-534-9975

Attention!

The deadline for the March issue is **February 10**. Send inquiries to Anne by

E-mail ambolte@charter.net
phone 314.352.0984
post 7032 Jamieson Apt F
St. Louis, MO 63109

St. Louis Audubon Society

P.O. Box 220227

St. Louis, Mo. 63122

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As a joint member with National Audubon, you will receive National Audubon's quarterly magazine (Audubon) as well as St. Louis Audubon Society's Newsletter (Tale Feathers). Now you also have the opportunity to join only the St. Louis Audubon Society, receive Tale Feathers, and participate in the educational and conservation activities of St. Louis Audubon. There is no distinction between individual and family membership. Dues cover all members at the same address. For information, call (314) 822-6595.

St. Louis Audubon Society / National Audubon Society -- Membership Application

Use this form to join St. Louis Audubon / National Audubon

For joint membership in St. Louis Audubon Society and National Audubon Society, Make checks payable to **National Audubon Society** and mail to St. Louis Audubon Society, P. O. Box 220227, Kirkwood, MO 63122.

____ Membership / \$35 For renewal in the National Audubon Society we recommend that you use the forms supplied by National Audubon. For more information contact Anne Rankin Horton at 636-256-3402

____ Introductory Membership / \$20 ____ Special Two-Year Introductory Membership / \$30

____ Senior Citizen (62 and older) / \$15 (New and renewal) ____ Student / \$15 (New and renewal)

Membership in only the St. Louis Audubon Society. Write checks payable to **SLAS**. Mail to St. Louis Audubon Society, P. O. Box 220227, Kirkwood, MO 63122.

____ Local Chapter Membership only (St. Louis Audubon Society), Introductory and renewal. / \$15

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Address _____

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